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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 001117

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/16/2013

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [YE](#)

SUBJECT: SALIH EXPRESSES CONDOLENCES FOR RIYADH BOMBINGS

Classified By: DCM ALAN MISENHEIMER FOR REASON 1.5 D

SUMMARY

11. (C) On May 14, Deputy FM al-Radi called in the DCM to deliver a condolence letter from ROYG President Salih to President Bush for the 5/13 Riyadh bombings. The letter expresses condolences for the American victims' families, condemnation of the terror acts, and Yemen's commitment to the war on terrorism. While delivering the letter, al-Radi spoke about ROYG-US security cooperation, the US-Saudi relationship, and the situation in Iraq since the return of Shia leader Mohammed Bakir al-Hakim.

CONDOLENCE LETTER

12. (U) The DCM, accompanied by polecon chief, was convoked on 5/14 by Abdullah Ali al-Radi, MFA Deputy Minister for Arab, Asian and African Affairs, to receive a condolence letter from ROYG President Ali Abdullah Salih to President Bush. The letter (text below in para 7) expresses emphatic condemnation of the Riyadh bombings as terror acts incompatible with all religious teachings and reaffirms Salih's previous pledges of partnership with the US in combating terrorism.

13. (C) Al-Radi also expressed his own personal condolences. The DCM briefed him on the methodology of the attacks, stressing that security practices in Yemen and elsewhere must adjust to counter the evolving tactics of the terrorists. The DCM took the opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding cooperation the Embassy receives from ROYG security forces protecting the Embassy, the Hadda compound (predominately American and international residents), the Sheraton Hotel, which hosts many American visitors, and Embassy residences.

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14. (C) Al-Radi was curious about US-Saudi relations in the aftermath of the attacks, given the tensions existing since 9/11. The DCM assured him that friendship and cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the US have stood the test of many years.

15. (C) Turning to Iraq, Al Radi asked for an update on the security situation, especially since the return of Shia leader Mohammed Bakir al-Hakim from Iran. Will the US be able to prevent a three-part ethnic breakup of the country? The Coalition's prompt establishment of three administrative divisions had provoked much speculation among Yemenis, he said. The DCM reminded him of the U.S. Administration's firm commitment to the territorial integrity of Iraq and underscored U.S. determination to restore essential services and help the Iraqi people build a better future.

COMMENT

16. (C) Al Radi stretched the delivery of the condolence letter into an hour's conversation on current events. His questions on Iraq's potential problems with Shia separatism and Saudi Arabia's current unenviable position may have been posed with the imminent arrival of Iranian President Khatami in mind. Khatami's official visit began today, 5/15.

TEXT OF SALIH CONDOLENCE LETTER

Dear friend Mr. President George W. Bush,
President of the United States of America, Washington

I was greatly moved and felt deep sorrow to receive the news that a number of American citizens had fallen victim to the distressing terrorist attack targeting several residential compounds in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

As we express to you our emphatic condemnation of this

shameful terrorist act, I offer my sincere sympathy for the victims who fell as a result of it and convey our deepest condolences to the families of the victims and to the friendly American people.

Such terrorist acts, which are incompatible with all religious teachings and proper humanitarian values, can only heighten the determination of the international community to move forward and redouble its efforts to combat and eradicate terrorism and prevent the loss of innocent souls. We affirm to you that the Republic of Yemen, which rejects terrorism in all its forms and aspects and from whatever source, will remain an effective partner to your friendly country and to the international community in combating terrorism and confronting its perpetrators.
Please accept my highest regards.

Signed:
Ali Abdullah Saleh
President of the Republic of Yemen

Sana'a
Rabi'ul Awwal 13, 1424
May 14, 2003
HULL